Ioway & Sac Mission Jan 19th 1843.

Dear Brethren;

Your communication of the 11th of Nov. last, Soliciting a correspondence with this Mission has been received; and we assure you, that we will, with pleasure, endeavour to communicate any missionary, or religious intelligence we may be able, whenever you may desire it. I am well aware of the apathy that exists, not only among the members of the Church, but also among Ministers and Theological Students, in regard to the Missionary Cause. There is so strong a desire to linger around our homes, and those we love, that many, no doubt, are not sensible of their being actuated by selfish motives in the selection of their fields of labour. But how else can we account for the fact, that some posts are so well supplied with labourers, and others almost entirely destitute? It is true a minister ought to have a support, and it would be well if like the Apostle, having their food and raiment, they would be therewith content. There is a large field of labour on the opposite side of the River from us, in what is called the Platte Purchase, added a few years ago to the State of Mo. Some destitute churches, and many that might be gathered into the fold of Christ, but no one to break unto them the Bread of Life. I have occasionally visited them, but cannot often consistently with my other duties. The New School are doing something for them, but there is room for more.

If you will take the trouble to propose such questions as may seem desirable it will afford me much pleasure to answer them as far as I am able. W. H.

But I presume the information you desire more particularly, is about the Indians; those injured and wronged tribes that are scattered over a large portion of this western country. I can truly say that they need all the sympathy and care that Christians can bestow upon them; for the men of the world are doing what they can to build up themselves upon their ruin. These, (I mean their traders) will endure cold, and hunger, and thirst, and nakedness, and death, merely for the sake of gathering a little of that which is declared to be the root of all evil. They depend much upon the ignorance of the Indians, and they are ever ready to take any advantage that may be placed in their way. Nor is there scarcely a tribe among whom they have not gone: even far, far beyond where the sound of the Christians voice is heard. The influence they leave behind them, is any thing but favourable to the introduction of Christianity among them. I do not know that I have ever heard of there being such a thing as an honest trader among them; consequently the missionary is looked upon with jealousy both by the Indians, and those who go among them for purposes of gain. It seems difficult for the former, (and I might include the latter) to have any correct idea of disinterested benevolence. Sometimes, it will require a long time to live down this prejudice, nay, I doubt whether it does not still linger about them, more, or less, until they experience a change of heart. But with God all things are possible, and he can change the savage heart, as well as that of the civilized person. Here is the missionaries whole strength and hope. Tis true, the strength and hope of the Christian in any sphere lies in God; but among the heathen the promise of God is the only bright spot. This is of itself sufficient. It also requires some time to obtain a knowledge of their language; and until this is obtained, we have to depend on Interpreters, who are generally without much principle. In obtaining a correct knowledge of their language, many difficulties are met with. Each individual is his own authority, and a strange ear, ~~will~~ not detect the niceties of sound until some knowledge of the principles of the language is acquired. There is however a good deal of similarity among many of the languages. For instance, Ioway Ottoe and Missouri Indians speak the same language with only a little difference of sound in some words, the Konzas Kanzes Osages and Quawpaws Quapaws speak the same. The Omahaws Omahaws and Puncas the same; and these two last resemble the Osage very mu[illegible] and there is some resemblance between all the above, showing that anciently they were, I think, one people, The Winnebagoes might also be included with the above.

Again the Sacs and Kickapoos speak the same, And these can understand and converse with the Pottawattomies very well, the Shawnee Peoria Kaskaskias, Weas and ~~Pi~~ Pea ankishaws, bear a strong resemblance to the three former. But between these and the first mentioned there is no more similarity than between the English and Arabic. The first mentioned are harsh, while the latter are smoother and more flowing; And in them I have never discovered two words alike. But I cannot, in the short space of a single letter, give you much satisfactory information about them.

As regards our labours here, I have nothing very cheering to communicate. I have been here six years and still there are no converts from among the wild Indians. Nor do they appear to feel much, or any interest in the words of Truth. Tis difficult to get them to collect together & to pay good attention when spoken to. A church was Organized last fall, when one Indian girl, who has been in Mr. Irvins family for above six years was admitted to the privileges of the church on examination. It was a precious season to us all. Though our numbers are small, there seemed to be a general outpouring of the Spirit of God. Several professed to ~~have~~ experience a change of heart. (mostly of persons employed under Government. But I must close. That you may all Dear Brethren be entirely consecrated to God, and useful in building up the Kingdom of Christ, is the Prayer of Yours in
in Christian Fellowship. Wm Hamilton

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St. Joseph, Mo.
Jan 26. 1844

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Corresponding Secy. of the
Comm. on For. Missions
(Society of Inquiry)
Princeton Theol. Sem.
N.J.

Recd Feby 1844.